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A Trip to See Black Brant

On Sunday, February 16, 1941, the Reynolds family and their friend Enid Austin drove to Tomales Bay with the primary object of seeing the Black Brant, *Branta nigricans*, reputed to be in that vicinity. Ariel got us up early, we had our breakfast, and were off before sunrise. We went by way of Sears Point Cutoff. There we saw great numbers of Canvas-back Ducks, Spoonies, Ruddies, and quite a few Buffle-heads and Golden Eyes. We also saw Black-bellied Plovers, three kinds of herons, the Anthony Green, Great Blue and the White American Egret. Gordon and Ariel were privileged to see for the first time quite a number of Bitterns sticking their long necks out of the dry marsh grass. To rouse mother to consciousness, who had a severe cold and is always "dopey" for several hours when she has to get up early, we made her get out of the car, set up her camera equipment, and take a moving picture of a convention of Avocets.

After much stop-and-go driving, we finally reached our destination. This was the eastern shore of Tomales Bay near the ocean inlet. From a high cliff, where we parked our car, we were greatly excited to see the Brant feeding on a low, marshy island in an arm of the bay. We estimated there were about three thousand birds there, and we saw more farther out. We decided to rent two rowboats at a place called Hamlet, and set out to see, completely equipped with cameras, life preservers and crackers. Daddy rowed the big boat, assisted by Gordon, and Ariel the small one. Although in the next hour we saw many birds, there were no good picture opportunities, due to the dullness of the day and the fact that the geese stayed about two hundred feet away from us all the time, moving at about the same rate of speed we were traveling.

Mrs. Austin and daddy sighted a small island, the shores of which were literally covered with birds,—Brant, Brown Pelicans and Cormorants. Daddy explained the presence of so many cormorants by a run of spawning herring. Unluckily for us, the Surf Scoters advertised our presence so vociferously by their clacking that most of the birds flew away by the time we reached them. A motorboat came along, the occupants of which were amusing themselves by guiding their boat at full speed into large numbers of birds from one end of the bay to the other. In spite of our disapproval of this practice, it afforded us a wonderful view of hundreds of birds passing over our heads. We were able to get a good look at the Black Brant, its short black neck with white band, its grayish belly, and its startling white tail.

As we were rowing toward the island, we came upon a school of small gray harbor seals, which were very inquisitive. They came within a few feet of our boats and stared at us for a long time. If we had been lucky enough to have had some fish to toss to them, they might have come up into our laps, they seemed so tame. When we reached the island, all the birds had flown, except two or three Brown Pelicans. We observed several Audubon Warblers flitting in and out of the tree, and upon exploring the island, we found a few daffodils, which made us think that at one time there might have been a house on this delightful spot. We

could not help thinking what an ideal homesite it would be for bird-lovers, right in the middle of Tomales Bay.

After partaking of substantial nourishment, we hurried into the boats and headed for the opposite shore. On this day, the lovely dark blue iris was conspicuously in evidence. Toward dark, when the hikers returned to the boats, they found them left high and dry on the shore by the outgoing tide. With grunts and groans and complaints, they were finally launched. Although all day the water had been calm, with approaching night it got very rough, a great wind came up, and it began to rain. To add to our troubles, we were grounded on shoals several times. It became pitch dark and we continually lost our course. At last, the adventurers reached harbor, tired, shivering, soaking wet, but happy with the memory of a successful day of exploration. We really "bagged" our Brant.

Ariel and Laurel Reynolds, Piedmont, California. September 17, 1941.



Black Tern in Berkeley Aquatic Park

On October 5, 1941, Mr. and Mrs. Frank G. Watson and I were driving around the Berkeley Aquatic Park a little before noon. We stopped for a few minutes on the western shore of the lake opposite the small island and log booms which connect it to the land. These booms were covered with Forster Terns (*Sterna forsteri*). Other terns were flying over the water; although mostly Forster, two Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) were also observed. One of the flying terns attracted my attention by its smaller size and gray-brown color. We watched the bird carefully. It landed on the boom and sat there giving us a good opportunity to scrutinize it. It was identified as a Black Tern (*Chlidonias nigra*). Shortly after a boat came sailing by and all the birds flew away.

In looking over the literature, it appears that published records of Black Terns in the San Francisco Bay area are not at all numerous. Grinnell and Wythe (Directory to the Bird-life of the San Francisco Bay Region, Pacific Coast Avifauna, No. 18, 1927, p. 44) cite the following: ". . . One individual near Alameda, May 5, 1910 . . .; two around salt ponds near Redwood City, San Mateo County, September 8 and November 26, 1913 . . ." These are the only records I could find. Also it would seem rather late in the season for Black Terns in this latitude. Their southward migration normally takes place in late August and early September.

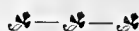
Monique L. Nichols, Berkeley, California. October 8, 1941.



Fork-tailed Petrels

Additional reports of Fork-tailed Petrels (*Oceanodroma furcata*) seen since last month's issue of THE GULL:

Six seen off the Berkeley fishing pier on September 13, 1941, from 2 to 4 p.m., by David G. Nichols, and seven seen same place on September 14, 1941, from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., by Monique Nichols.



Mockingbirds in San Francisco

A guest at the October meeting spoke of having a Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*) in the neighborhood of Twentieth and Dolores Streets, San Francisco, for several years. Some of our members were inclined to doubt this record, believing San Francisco to be an unlikely place for this species. However, there have been a few observed and the following data should be of interest:

One seen in gardens about San Jose Avenue and Twenty-fifth Street in the Mission District during the late spring of 1906, It was possibly a released cage bird. Milton S. Ray in *The Condor*, volume XVIII, no. 6.

One seen at Vallejo and Gough Streets, San Francisco, January 28, 1932, by J. Mailliard, *THE GULL*, March, 1932, volume 14, number 3.

One seen and heard singing, by Mrs. Isabel Porter Collins, in Golden Gate Park, March 13, 1932.

One seen on Dolores Street, January 19, 1937, and several times later by Gordon Bolander.

One seen at Land's End, September 27, 1941, by Arthur H. Myer. (Editor.)



October Field Trip

The field trip on Sunday, October 12, 1941, was not as well attended as had been expected due to the threatening weather, which, however, cleared by 10:30 a.m. and made the trip a very enjoyable one. The location, Tilden Regional Park, one mile east of Berkeley in Contra Costa County, is an area covered with underbrush and native trees through which runs a small stream.

A discussion occurred over the observance of a Flicker with light coloring under the wings. It was finally thought to be a hybrid of the Red-shafted and Northern Flicker.

The Lower Pond was inspected with a view to answering the request of the park management as to what could be done to make it more attractive to waterfowl. It was decided that as the pond already had many cat-tails growing around it, the only thing necessary was to keep the water at a higher level and to plant some special duck grass, also to place sufficient signs warning the public as to the nature of the pond.

Thirty species were observed in this area as follows:

Mallard	Red-shafted Flicker	Western Robin
Pintail	California Woodpecker	Hermit Thrush
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Hairy Woodpecker	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Cooper Hawk	Black Phoebe	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Red-tailed Hawk	Coast Jay	Audubon Warbler
Sparrow Hawk	California Jay	Spotted Towhee
Valley Quail	Plain Titmouse	Brown Towhee
Horned Owl	Bush-tit	Oregon Junco
Anna Hummingbird	Winter Wren	White-crowned Sparrow
Belted Kingfisher	Bewick Wren	Song Sparrow

Luncheon was eaten at one of the delightful picnic areas provided by the park. Thousands of oak moths were in the air and on the trees which had been defoliated by their caterpillars. A large skunk and a six-point Mule Deer were also noted. Our party inspected the caves in the old lava intrusion which, it is said, were inhabited by wildcats in the early days and from which fact the name "Wild Cat Canyon" was derived.

We then went to the Berkeley Aquatic Park on the East Shore Highway and observed the following thirteen species:

Pied-billed Grebe	Killdeer	Western Gull
Farallon Cormorant	Western Willet	Ring-billed Gull
American Egret	Western Sandpiper	Bonaparte Gull
Black-crowned Night Heron	Northern Phalarope	Forster Tern
American Coot		

Those who attended were Mrs. Kelly; Misses Blake, MacIver, Perdue, Watanabe, Webb; Messrs. Leffler, Myer and six guests.

Herman V. Leffler, Trip Historian.



Book Notice: "Sierra Outpost," an interesting book by Lila Lofberg and David Malcomson, who were able, during the winter months, to become inti-

mately acquainted with coyotes, birds and other animals of the snowbound mountain fastness. Published by Duell, Sloan and Pierce Inc., 270 Madison Avenue, New York. Price \$2.50, less 25% to members of our Association.

In the November, 1927, issue of THE GULL may be found an interesting article on "Townsend Solitaires" by Mrs. Lofberg.



Audubon Notes

November Meeting: The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 13th, at 8 p.m., in the Auditorium of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Building, 245 Market Street, San Francisco.

Mr. Allen D. Cruickshank, lecturer for the National Audubon Society, of New York, will be the speaker, taking for his subject "Wildlife Through the Lens." Motion pictures and a fine series of slides in color will be shown, including Loons in their northern breeding grounds; remarkable night studies of Barn Owls around their nest in an old deserted attic and Gannets by the thousands nesting on the side of picturesque cliffs. Mr. Cruickshank will tell of the growing interest in birds and methods of attracting them and will give bird calls.

Members may bring guests.



November Field Trip will be taken on Sunday, the 16th, to Lake Lagunitas, Marin County, one group going from Ross via Phoenix Lake, and a second group via Fairfax through Porteous Canyon. Both groups will meet at the bus station opposite Ross Town Hall about 9:15 a.m. Buy a round-trip ticket and take bus leaving at 8:10 a.m. from Fifth and Mission Streets Bus Terminal. Bring luncheon, which will be eaten at Lake Lagunitas.

Members may bring friends interested in birds.



October Meeting: The 290th regular meeting was held on Thursday, the 9th, in the Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets, San Francisco, with about one hundred members and guests present. Second Vice-President David G. Nichols presiding.

The name of Miss Suzanne de Pichon was proposed for membership.

The following observations were reported:

Mr. Joseph J. Webb: Napa, Golden-crowned Sparrow, September 21, and Lewis Woodpecker, 22nd, the same date on which one arrived last year.

Mr. C. A. Harwell entertained us with his whistling, and explained his scale of bird song. He also showed pictures of the Audubon-sponsored winter bird trips to the Marysville and Salton Sea areas, and a motion picture of the California Condor.



Christmas Bird Count: The annual bird count will take place on the 21st of December, the Sunday following the regular trip. Will those members who care to take part in this annual event kindly either get in touch with Miss Frances J. Blake, 1505 Holly Street, Berkeley, or with Mrs. Stephens?

Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President.....	Mr. James Moffitt.....	California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco
Corresponding Secretary.....	Mr. Joseph J. Webb.....	519 California St., San Francisco
Treasurer and Editor.....	Mrs. A. B. Stephens.....	1695 Filbert St., San Francisco
Associate Editor.....	Mr. David G. Nichols.....	1713 Dwight Way, Berkeley
Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 p.m., Little Theatre, Old U. S. Mint Building, Fifth and Mission Streets.		

Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year.

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year.

Life memberships, \$50.00.

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.